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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF S/E NATSIOS, AND AF/SPG  
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY  
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

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TAGS: PGOV PREL KPKO AU UN SU

SUBJECT: MINAWI WARNS OF NEW WAVE OF NRF ATTACKS

REF: KHARTOUM 00890

Classified By: P/E Chief Trevor Monroe, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)  
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¶1. (C) Senior Assistant to the President and leader of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) Minni Minawi warned Poloff on June 19 of a new infiltration of National Redemption Front (NRF) forces into South Darfur near Haskanita. UN reports of June 18 had indicated that a group of NRF fighters had massed in South Darfur and were preparing to re-join the SLM. Minawi confirmed these initial accounts but said that they had been a ruse to enter SLM-controlled territory near Haskanita.

¶2. (C) According to Minawi, the NRF intends to foment instability in South Darfur in order to undermine the SLM. NRF attacks on African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and Sudanese Government installations would either underscore the SLM's weakness or be blamed on the SLM, explained Minawi. To pre-empt this scenario, Minawi is preparing a report on the recent NRF infiltration. He plans to present this report to the AU and the Government of National Unity (GNU) on June 20.

(Comment: With Sudan's recent "acceptance" of the UN/AU hybrid force, Sudanese officials will likely shift all culpability for the violence in Darfur to Darfur Peace Agreement signatory and non-signatory factions. End comment.)

¶3. (C) The SLM continues to maintain that rogue elements outside of the SLM command structure have perpetrated much of the violence attributed to the movement. To address increasing opposition to the SLM among AMIS, humanitarian organizations, and the people of Darfur, Minawi is considering a "conference" of SLM commanders, AMIS, and international non-governmental organizations to discuss the security situation and examine methods for increasing stability. He is encouraged by the departure of AMIS Force Commander Luke Aprezi, who Minawi viewed as being anti-SLM, and hopes to capitalize on the opportunity of new AMIS leadership. Minawi's thinking on the conference is in its early stages, and he has not yet raised the idea with AMIS.

¶4. (C) As recently as June 17, President Bashir has been pressing Minawi to contribute to plans for returning displaced persons to their homes and beginning reconstruction programs. The SLM leader said that he has offered no response to Bashir's overtures, recognizing that security must be the first priority. Minawi has urged Bashir to concentrate on disarmament of the Janjaweed while he works to bring more cohesion within the SLM. The President has responded that the National Congress Party (NCP) "doesn't control them (the Janjaweed) anymore." While Minawi stated for the second time in two weeks that Arab tribes around

Kebkabiya had split from NCP-backed Janjaweed leader Musa Hillal (reftel), he acknowledged that the NCP could easily regain control of these tribes through bribery. The SLM's own need for financial resources were acute, however. Access to more resources would complement his other efforts to stabilize the security environment, such as the SLM-AMIS-NGO conference, and ease the tensions between AMIS and humanitarian organizations, which often lead to violence.

FERNANDEZ